

quizzing us on vocabulary or testing us on our school subjects. However, our grades don't matter as much to him as long as we try our best. His guidance in decision making is always helpful. On Thursday and Friday mornings he gets up early with my sister and me to help us get ready for band. He takes care of us when we are sick, comforts us when we are sad, and laughs with us when we are happy. Most of all, he makes each of us feel important and special in our own way.

My dad shows how caring he is through his service in the community. If anyone in the neighborhood needs help, my dad will help them with anything from taking care of a pet to vacuuming out a flooded basement. He is currently coaching four basketball teams because he feels all children should have the opportunity to play. During parish mission projects, my dad generously donates his time to assist however possible. During the shoe box drive at church, for example, he wrapped shoe boxes, bought needed supplies at the store, and cleaned up after everyone left. He has delivered furniture to a family in Roger's Park as well as packed peanut butter sandwich lunches for the needy. My father is a person who truly loves and cares for others.

My father tries to respect everyone. To me, respect is treating others the way you want to be treated no matter how they treat you. My father is very fair. He has probably learned that from raising four children. If he is going to let my sister stay up a little later, then he lets us all stay up a little later. He also gave everyone on my basketball team equal playing time this year. He is very polite and shows good sportsmanship. Being considerate, my father tries to think about how things will affect others. He is always open to new ideas and never laughs at things unless they are meant to be funny. If there was an award for the most patient and easy going person, I am sure my dad would win it. His positive outlook on life and his gentle ways of speaking win him others' respect. My father never yells at anyone. Instead, he talks things out and treats people with respect. He tries to bring out the best in everyone.

My father has a lot of responsibilities in his life, which he handles well. He is, first of all, responsible for his family. He works all day to provide for us. He also helps around the house doing various chores. His responsibilities as a father are endless. He also has a responsibility to love and be faithful to my mom. He is responsible for helping his parents and my mom's parents with things around their homes as well as with financial advice. Many of his responsibilities lie outside our family. He is involved in many of the decisions regarding our school's expansion project this year. He is on the finance committee at his old high school, as well as many committees in our parish. To fulfill his religious responsibilities, he attends church regularly, is a Eucharistic minister, makes financial contributions to the church, and tries to live out the Gospel.

My dad is a very important and irreplaceable part of my life. He has taught me much about life and has set my life on a good, strong foundation. I know that my dad will always be there to guide me, comfort me, help me, and celebrate with me. Next year, I will be starting high school. There will be many changes in my life. I know that things won't be as difficult because I have a great role model and coach walking with me every step of the way. Knowing my father, the best way to thank him would be to live my life as he has coached me, to be a caring, respectful,

and responsible person. With a coach like my dad and God on my side, I know I'll be a winner in the game of life.

VFW'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, in celebration of VFW's 100th anniversary, I want to recognize the efforts of this worthwhile organization that continues to assist tens of thousands of veterans, as well as their dependents and survivors. Today, the VFW's 2 million veterans, and its auxiliaries' 750,000 members, provide \$2.7 million annually in scholarships and awards to U.S. high school students. In addition, the VFW provides \$3 million annually for cancer research and \$15 million for veteran-service programs.

In Texas alone, there are approximately 174,452 retired military who have done their part in defending our country—we need to recognize their service. On Memorial Day, I will be presenting the Bronze Star Medal to Army Captain James Flowers who served our country during World War II. During an invasion of Normandy, Mr. Flowers lost both legs. The tragedy Mr. Flowers suffered should not go unrewarded.

I am consistently awed by the great sacrifice committed by so many of behalf of this great nation. Let us not forget the goals of the VFW as noted in the 1936 congressional charter: "To assist worthy comrades; to perpetuate their memory . . . ; and to assist their widows and orphans; to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States; to maintain and extend the institutions of freedom; and to preserve and defend the United States from all her enemies, whomsoever."

ESTABLISHING FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS WITH PACIFIC RIM COUNTRIES

HON. PHILIP M. CRANE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to encourage the establishment of free trade agreements between the United States and certain Pacific Rim countries.

H.R. 1942 directs the President to initiate preliminary consultations with the governments of each eligible Pacific Rim country to determine the feasibility and desirability of negotiating the elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers in the context of a bilateral free trade agreement. If a positive determination is made, the President shall request a meeting at the ministerial level to consider the conditions under which formal negotiations regarding a free trade agreement could be commenced. The countries that may be considered for eligibility are the members of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Group (APEC.)

Because open markets increase competition, eliminate inefficiencies, and result in lower costs to consumers and manufacturers, trade liberalizing agreements improve our prosperity and encourage the creation of secure, higher wage jobs. Sadly, the President's failure to support the passage of trade negotiating authority in this Congress has crippled the United States trade agenda and has brought a halt to the expansion of international markets for U.S. exports.

This legislation responds to the President's inaction by calling on him to investigate opportunities for negotiating free trade agreements with long time U.S. allies in working to increase economic growth through trade liberalization, both in the World Trade Organization and in APEC. Countries such as Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore, because of the largely open nature of their economies and their track record of supporting United States trade negotiating objectives, are countries which would be eligible immediately under the criteria established in this bill.

Building closer ties and coordinating with countries whose interests are largely friendly to the United States will have immense pay-offs as trade negotiations in APEC and the World Trade Organization proceed. Bilateral and multilateral trade agreement negotiations, such as the NAFTA, have been shown to exert constructive pressure on multilateral and regional trade negotiations. Bilateral trade talks enlarge common areas of agreement on trade rules and disciplines which can then be advanced more successfully in the context of larger negotiations among additional trading partners. This bill is all about finding opportunities wherever we can to break down barriers to United States exports and keep the trade agenda moving forward.

The real advantage of this legislation is that it will improve and expand our trade ties with countries in the Pacific Rim region and reassure countries that the United States, despite the absence of trade negotiating authority, is not turning inward and adopting a trade policy defined by narrow and inward-looking special interests. H.R. 1942 would direct the President to pursue aggressively more open, equitable, and reciprocal market access for United States goods and services. Continuing the pursuit of lower economic barriers and standardized rules and procedures governing international business will yield enormous benefits to our firms and workers. I urge my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring this important bill.

BOB COOK TURNS 80

HON. WALTER B. JONES

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 26, 1999

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a constituent who has rendered great service to his country and his community and who will turn 80 on June 19. His family and friends will honor him at a surprise fete on Saturday, May 29, in Duck, North Carolina.

Robert (Bob) Cook worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture for 26 years before he